CALPEEK

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CAMPAIGN 2002: **DAVIS MEETS WITH PRESIDENT, BUT THERE'S NO GIVE BY BUSH ON PRICE CAPS.**

Editor's note: Anyone who thought that Pres. George W. Bush was going to help Calif. by agreeing to Gov. Gray Davis' plea for price caps on electric rates was sadly mistaken. The President and Gov. Davis held a short and totally unproductive meeting May 29th in L.A. Here's our update & analysis, with some new polling data from Mervin Fields...

...The way some in the national press played the meeting, you'd think Davis had already declared he was running for president in 2004. He hasn't even won election to a 2nd term and if you look at the latest Field Poll, Gov. Davis is in a little bit of trouble because of this ***energy mess***. The Field Poll was taken May 11-20 among 727 registered voters. Here are some of the key findings:

- Davis' Job Approval Rating: 42% approve; 49% disapprove; 9% no opinion. In Feb. 2000, Davis' approval rating stood at 62%...

- Davis' Re-Elect Numbers: 14% very inclined to re-elect; 27% somewhat inclined; 19% not too inclined; 32% not inclined at all; 8% no opinion...

...Those are not good numbers, but time and Pres. Bush's and VP Dick Cheney's solid *opposition* to ***price caps*** on wholesale electricity rates may actually work to help Davis. While it's true that the long term solution is to build more power plants (which Calif. is already doing in a very aggressive way), *conservation* and *wholesale electric price caps* are the ***only things*** that will really help Calif. get past this summer. Take a look at these numbers about ***price caps***. In the Field Poll, ***68%*** of registered voters said price caps were a good thing vs. 26% who replied negatively, with 6% offering no opinion. Even among GOP voters, 57% said price caps were good (79% of Demos said the same thing). So on this point, Bush would seem to be at odds with the vast majority of Calif. voters...

...Back to politics. Despite the fact that Davis' numbers are in the dumps for now, there's only one GOPer in this poll who can beat Davis: L.A. Mayor Richard Riordan. CA Sec. of State Bill Jones and GOP businessman Bill Simon just don't cut it in terms of beating Davis – at least not at this point. In a 4-way GOP primary with Nat'l Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice thrown into the mix, it's Riordan 31%, Rice 22%, Jones 13%, Simon 5%, undecided 29%. Without Rice in the mix, it's Riordan 40%, Jones 18%, Simon 7%. In a GOP battle between the Two Bills, it's Jones 24% vs. 10% for Simon with 66% undecided...

...In 1-on-1 match ups with Davis, it looks like this:
- Davis 43% vs. Riordan 42%, 15% undecided.
- Davis 45% vs. Rice 36%, 19% undecided.
- Davis 47% vs. Jones 33%, 20% undecided.
- Davis 48% vs. Simon 31%, 21% undecided...

...FYI: everything has to be put in it's proper political perspective – in other words *political spin*. And from Davis' key political operative Garry South comes these words to remember: former Gov. Pete Wilson posted some terrible Field Poll numbers in May 1993 – only 15% good and excellent. Wilson's reelect number was only 27% vs. 61% elect someone else. And Wilson trailed not just Kathleen Brown, but also John Garamendi. We all know what happened. Stay tuned...

L.A. Election Preview

Editor's note: The June 5th election features the runoff for L.A. Mayor, L.A. City Attorney and 5 city council seats. Most **Calpeek** sources expect voter turnout to be about 32-35% - but it could end up being lower. Here's our final update & analysis...

THE BATTLE FOR L.A. MAYOR

...In the battle to replace *termed out* Mayor Richard Riordan, both sides seem to be saying the same thing when it comes to picking the winner between L.A. City Attorney Jim Hahn and former Assemblyman Antonio Villaraigosa:

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it just depends on who gets their voters out to the polls. And while it's a rather stock answer, in this particular runoff, ***turnout*** will be the key…

…Villaraigosa is perhaps the *most charismatic* cross-over candidate L.A. has ever seen. He can literally charm the dogs off the back of a meat wagon. In a campaign where the two candidates agree about most of the issues, this campaign is really made for tv – where Villaraigosa's team of Doak Carrier & O'Donnell are stressing Antonio's warmth, charm and a long list of endorsements – including Gov. Gray Davis and L.A. Mayor Richard Riordan. Hahn isn't a charmer like Villaraigosa, but he's got *20 years of city hall experience*. Hahn media guru Bill Carrick has combined the experience to go with a *law & order* message. Looking for an easy match up: it's charisma vs. experience…

…For Villaraigosa to win, he needs a really big Latino vote. For Hahn to win, he needs a solid turnout in South Central and a big vote in the San Fernando Valley. Both sides have massive GOTV efforts underway: big rallies for supporters; phone banking; and heavy precinct walking. While both sides have raised lots of money, Villaraigosa probably has a lead going into the final push and there will be tons of money spent by independent expenditure committees for both…

…In terms of polling, the *L.A Times* survey shows Hahn holding a **47%** to **40%** lead over Villaraigosa. As **Calpeek** hit deadline (5/30) Hahn's team was going back into the field for last minute tracking. On 5/22 and 5/23, a Hahn 2-day tracking poll (by Greenberg Quinlan Research) showed just about the same thing at the *LAT*: Hahn leading Villaraigosa by 48% to 42%. A poll by Villaraigosa's team (The Mellman Group) showed Villaraigosa holding a 44% to 41% lead, 15% undecided. This poll was taken May 26-28…

…FYI: the *L.A. Times* survey points one thing out which may impact this runoff. Among Latino voters, Villaraigosa is only pulling *57%* vs. *27%* for Hahn, with 16% undecided. Now this could go up for Villaraigosa, but Hahn's ability to cut into the Latino vote (especially among older Latino voters) has to be of concern to the Villaraigosa campaign…

…As for the past few days, Hahn's team remains in an attack mode – on tv blasting Villaraigosa on the Vignali Pardon. **Calpeek** won't rehash this whole thing, but 5 years ago Villaraigosa wrote a letter to the White House asking that convicted cocaine dealer Carlos Vignali be pardoned. The whole thing might have been lost had it not been for the brouhaha surrounding the pardon of Marc Rich by Pres. Bill Clinton. The *L.A. Times* found out about the Vignali pardon and the rest is history. The tv ads by Hahn are hard hitting – and the ending tag line is especially harsh: *L.A. Can't Trust Antonio Villaraigosa*. The ad appeals to conservatives and moderates – key parts of Hahn's voter base. Villaraigosa's team hasn't handled the response well and yet they've had months to prepare. In the end, if this Vignali ad works – it will prove once again that negative ads are very effective...

THE BATTLE FOR CITY ATTORNEY

…L.A. Councilman Mike Feuer holds a *40%* to *31%* lead over L.A. Dep. Mayor Rocky Delgadillo, with a rather large **29%** undecided in the *L.A. Times* poll. Both are Demos, but most all of the key Demo endorsements have gone to Feuer. Mayor Riordan is solidly behind Delgadillo and is helping pull GOP voters to his corner. In the money game, Delgadillo has an advantage and he's getting lots of help from the outdoor advertising industry. The billboard industry absolutely hates Feuer. Both are up on tv, but Delgadillo is in an attack mode – hitting Feuer for being asleep at the wheel during the Rampart/LAPD scandal. Stay tuned…

32nd CD SPECIAL UPDATE: WATSON VS. HENTSCHEL.

Editor's note: It's down to the final days of campaigning in the June 5th special election runoff to replace the late Julian Dixon(D). The battle to replace Dixon is between former CA State Sen. Dianne E. Watson(D) and GOP businesswoman Noel Irwin Hentschel. Here's our final update & analysis…

…Hentschel is spending a huge amount of money (probably more than a $1 million), but sources say it's not going to make any difference. Hentschel, who lives in Bel Air, but grew up in the Crenshaw & Culver City areas, can spend twice that amount and the outcome would be the same because the 32nd CD has a *70% Demo registration*. Hentschel tv ad refers to her as *a new kind of Republican*, but she's very conservative on a number of key issues – and that won't fly with Demos in this ethnically diverse CD…

…Watson, a former LAUSD board member and CA State Senator, wins on June 5th. The only question is how far above GOP registration Hentschel will go. A poll in early May showed Watson with **60%** vs. **15%** for Hentschel; **4%** for Green Party candidate Donna Warren; Reform Party candidate Ezola Foster at **2%**; with a rather large **19%** undecided. GOP registration in the 32nd CD is about 12%…

…Hentschel is on Black radio; cable tv (*Noel in the 'Hood*); has tons of yellow & red signs; and has sent out at least 8 pieces of mail vs. only 2 for Watson. Watson will be on some key Black/Demo slates; has a modest GOTV effort headed by savvy GOTV consultant Sue Burnside – hitting

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the top 50 to 100 precincts in the 32nd CD; and will have a modest Black radio buy the last 4 days. It's enough to get the job done…

…Two key things Watson has going for her: *1)* solid support of the entire Black elected establishment – ranging from U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters to L.A. Co. Sup. Yvonne Burke and now including State Sen. Kevin Murray(D), who endorsed Watson about 2-3 weeks ago; *2)* the L.A. Mayor's race. Just about all Demo votes for either Jim Hahn or Antonio Villaraigosa in the 32nd CD are also votes for Watson…

…FYI: Hentschel sent out a news release saying she'd be joining Pres. George W. Bush at a May 29th luncheon. But given the heavy Demo numbers in the 32nd CD, you'd think she'd keep her distance from GWB, especially since it's very clear that Pres. Bush isn't going to help Calif. with the energy crisis. Stay tuned…

***DC VIEWS:* AS DEMOS PREPARE TO TAKE OVER THE U.S. SENATE, CALIF. MAY FINALLY GET A BREAK…**
Editor's note: Don't think there's ever been anything like the big flip flop in U.S. Senate as a result of U.S. Sen. Jim Jeffords of Vermont jumping from the ranks of Republicans to become an independent. Here's our update & analysis…

…By now the only insiders who don't know that Tom Daschel will be replacing Trent Lott as Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate are those individuals who have been living up a tree with no cell phone…

…The amazing thing is that until just before this story broke, the Capitol Hill press was almost clueless about the impending switch. But once the leak occurred, Jeffords became Page 1 copy. And just who "blew it" in terms of the Jeffords switch? GOPers on Capitol Hill were pointing fingers at White House political operative Karl Rove, while the White House was blaming GOP Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. The answer is somewhere in the middle, but the simple fact may be that Jeffords just didn't feel comfortable being a Republican any longer. Regardless, the switch means that Demos will be in control for the first time since 1994…

…What's this mean in terms of Calif.?? Two immediate short term impacts: 1) Two days after the switch (7/23), U.S. Rep. Chris Cox(R-Orange Co.) wrote a letter to Pres. George W. Bush asking the president to take his name out of consideration to be a federal judge. Had the Jeffords switch not happened, Cox still might be in the hunt for this 9th U.S. Court of Appeals judgeship, although both U.S. Senators Feinstein and Boxer were opposed to his nomination. So for the time being, Cox is solidly back in the U.S. House and those guys who wanted to replace him (Assemblyman Bill Campbell, businessman Mark Chapin Johnson and State Sen. Dick Ackerman) will just have to wait…

…And 2) With the switch in power, Demos now have the *investigative authority* to hold Senate Committee hearings on a number of different topics. But guess what comes first? U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein has already written a letter to U.S. Sen. Joe Lieberman (incoming chair of the Senate Governmental Affairs Cmt.) asking him to hold hearings about the ***energy crisis*** in Calif. – specifically about any improper relationship between FERC and Enron Chair Kenneth Lay. Heavy stuff – and if true very bad headlines for the Bush Administration. Stay tuned…

***ENERGY & POLITICS:* NEW FIELD POLLING COVERS WIDE RANGE OF ENERGY PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS.**
Editor's note: With 3 sets of polling numbers all dealing with Calif.'s ongoing energy crisis, S.F. based pollsters Mervin Field and Mark DiCamillo have provided some of the most interesting info yet. The polling was conducted May 11-20 among 1,015 Calif. adults. Here's our report & analysis…

…In the long term, Gov. Gray Davis(D) may do much better than numbers now suggest. Davis' ***job performance*** numbers relating just to the energy crisis show 38% poor vs. 32% fair vs. 27% good, with 3% no opinion. In contrast, Pres. George W. Bush's numbers show 54% poor vs. 20% fair vs. 22% good, with 4% no opinion…

…But in the short term, Davis faces a number of problems. To begin with, Davis' Memoradon Of Understanding with So. Calif. Edison(SCE) is all but dead. Efforts by Assembly Demos to come up with an alternative plan which doesn't look like a bailout is going nowhere – for now. Most sources agree that it will be Senate PPT John Burton who must take the lead, with assistance from Senate Energy Cmt. Chair Debra Bowen(D-Marina Del Rey). Part of the deal would involve buying SCE's portion of the electricity grid. Here's the first data from Field:

◆ Do you approve or disapprove of Calif. buying the power grid from SCE: Approve 51% vs. 41% disapprove, with 8% no opinion…

◆ On the question of creating a State-run public power authority: a good thing 54% vs. 36% a bad thing. No opinion 10% (SB 6X created the CA Consumer Power & Conservation Financing Authority)…

◆ State floating $13.4 billion in bonds to help pay for

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power: 38% approve vs. 52% disapprove, with 10% no opinion. (SB 31X)

◆ Job approval rating for CA Legislature: poor/very poor – 41%; fair – 34%; good/very good – 16%; no opinion – 9%...

...Part of Davis' problem is that **59%** still believe the current power shortage was created by the generators to drive up prices – and that the power crisis isn't real. Regardless, **95%** believe the situation in Calif. is either very serious or somewhat serious. As for solutions, here are some answers which might surprise you:

◆ Build more nuclear power plants: 59% favor vs. 36% oppose, with 5% no opinion...

◆ Drill more oil/gas wells in state tidelands along the Calif. coast: 44% favor vs. 48% oppose; 8% no opinion...

◆ Relax air quality standards in some areas to bring older power plants back online: 53% favor vs. 39% oppose, with 8% no opinion...

◆ Should Gov. Davis use his power to seize private power plants if they raised prices this summer? 44% favor vs. 48% oppose, with 8% no opinion. Stay tuned...

CALPEEK'S INFOBAHN; POLITICAL SHORT TAKES.

Editor's note: Here are a few items, political & otherwise, worth noting...

■ *The New Bush Tax Cut* – Without going into all the details ($300 for all individuals by 7/1/01; marriage penalty relief; estate tax relief; pension & education incentives), President George W. Bush really owes a big *thank you* to U.S. Sen. John Breaux(D-LA), a key member of incoming Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle's team. It was Breaux who played a key role in reshaping the original Bush plan (from $1.6 trillion in cuts to $1.35 trillion). And it was Breaux who helped pull along a number of moderate "new Demos," such as Calif.'s U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein. Calif.'s Barbara Boxer(D) abstained. In the U.S. House, Demos Capps, Condit, Dooley, Tauscher and Schiff all voted YES (w/all GOP Calif. U.S. House members). Demos who abstained included Baca, Becerra, Honda, McDonald, Waters & Waxman. All the other Demos voted NO...

■ *Going After FERC* – If at first you don't succeed – try again. That's apparently what Gov. Gray Davis will do. The Legislative lawsuit against FERC – to force that federal agency to do its job by imposing just and reasonable electric rates – was rejected 5/29 by a 3-judge panel from the 9th U.S. Court of Appeals. Davis is hopeful FERC will get the message, but that seems doubtful. The basis for the Legislative action, as well as possible action by Gov. Davis, is based on legal research done by State Sen. Steve Peace(D-El Cajon). Peace spelled out the basis for going after FERC in a Nov. 17, 2000 letter to PUC Pres. Loretta Lynch. Without getting overly technical, Peace contends that the wholesale electric rates that were charged to SCE & PG&E in 2000 by the generators were illegal – and that the remedy is simple: FERC should order the power generators to refund the overcharges...

CALPEEK's NEW JOBS AND PERSONNEL NOTICES.

Editor's note: Here are some items to mark down in your notebook...

● The CA Demo Party has moved to larger offices in Sacto. New address: 1401 21st Street, Ste.100, Sacto, CA 95814. Same phone (916)442-5707...

● Savvy pr pro Sharon Hawkins has departed Sacto office of Burson Marsteller. She's freelancing for the present. (916)214-4295 or sageshmcmillan@aol.com...

● The S.F.-based political consulting firm of Terris, Jaye & Barnes has split in two. Michael Terris and Barry Barnes remain together, but Eric Jaye has formed Storefront Political Media. T&B's ☎(415)291-0679. Jaye's new ☎(415)515-5617...

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